

BROOKMONT PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS

HAER No. MD-98

Brookmont pedestrian crossing on Clara Barton Parkway, spanning Clara Barton Parkway

Glen Echo Vicinity

Montgomery County

Maryland

HAER

MD

16-GLENECH, V,

4-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

National Park Service

Department of the Interior

P.O. Box 37127

Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

## HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

### BROOKMONT PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS

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#### I. INTRODUCTION

**Location:** On Clara Barton Parkway, 4.3 miles from Interstate 495; carries Brookmont Pedestrian Crossing over the Clara Barton Parkway in Montgomery County, within George Washington Memorial Parkway.

**FHWA Structure No.:** 3300-036T.

**Date of Construction:** 1966-1967.

**Type:** Reinforced concrete box girder bridge with spiral ramp.

**Designer:** Bureau of Public Roads with approval from the National Park Service.

**Contractor:** Hult Construction Corporation.

**Present Owner:** National Capital Region, National Park Service (NPS).

**Present Use:** Handicapped accessible pedestrian access to C&O Canal.

**Significance:** The Brookmont Pedestrian Crossing was built as part of the extension of the parkway along the Maryland shores of the Potomac River. The project underscores the NPS commitment to maintaining public access to recreational facilities.

**Project Information:** Documentation of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and Clara Barton Parkway was undertaken as a multi-year project by the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), a combined division of the National Park Service, Robert Kapsch, Chief. The project was sponsored by the Park Roads Program of the National Park Service, John Gingles, Deputy Chief, Engineering and Safety Services Division. The Project Supervisor was Sara Amy Leach, HABS Historian. Bridge reports were prepared by Elizabeth M. Nolin (1988); Michael P. Kucher (University of Delaware, 1993); and Jennifer P. Wentzien (University of Washington, 1994).

HABS Report No. VA-69 prepared by Timothy Davis (University of Texas) provides an overview history of the entire parkway project. Jack E. Boucher and Jet Lowe produced the large-format photographs. The Washington-based summer 1994 documentation team was headed by landscape architect Tim Mackey (Harvard University, Graduate School of Design).

## II. HISTORY

The Brookmont Pedestrian Overpass and the Sycamore Island Pedestrian Overpass (HAER No. MD-97) are located on the Clara Barton segment of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). Maintaining access to National Park Service (NPS) sites along the historic C&O Canal has been difficult due to the length of the park and limited access to the parkway, one of the fundamental tenants of parkway design. The bridges provide pedestrian access to a picnic area on the C&O Canal near the NPS Canal Clipper at Lock No. 5, as well as the multi-use trail which runs alongside the canal.

The use of a spiral ramp creates a dramatic structure in keeping with contemporary ideas emphasizing the "lightness" of structure. In their final report, engineers, who are not known to render aesthetic judgements in their reports, praised the contribution of spiral construction to the beautification of the parkway.<sup>1</sup>

### Description

The Brookmont Pedestrian Overpass is a three span overpass connected to a 587 degree spiral ramp at the west end. The superstructure is supported by reinforced concrete abutments and seven cylindrical piers. Due to unstable soil conditions, foundations are comprised of spread footings over cast in place piles. A 3000-4000 psi compressive strength Class "A" concrete with Darx air entraining admixture was used. The maximum span on the overpass is 47'. The reinforced concrete deck is a 10' wide cast in place box beam structure. The deck transcends 26'-4" through the west approach spiral to the center line and then descends 5' to the east end. The railing is steel with an aluminum handrail. Nearby guardrails are timber. Embankments are hand laid rock. Final construction costs totaled \$81,385 with an additional \$18,248 for construction engineering.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bureau of Public Roads, "Final Construction Report Project 1A10."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

### III. SOURCES

- U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads. Plans for Proposed Project 100A10. Microfiche reductions of original construction drawings on file at National Capital Region Park Headquarters, National Park Service, Washington D.C.
- U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads, "Final Construction Report, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Project 100A10." 1968. Report available from the remote storage facility, drawer 208 of the Eastern Federal Lands Division, Federal Highway Administration, Sterling, VA.
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. "Structure Inventory and Appraisal Sheet - Structure No. 3300-036T." 4/21/93.
- U.S. Department of the Interior, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), No. VA-69, "George Washington Memorial Parkway," 1994. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.